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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 011316
SIPDIS
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TAGS PGOV, KDEM, PHUM, PREL, RS
SUBJECT: POLITKOVSKAYA'S DEATH SENDS SHOCK WAVES THROUGH
MOSCOW; PROSECUTOR GENERAL TAKES PERSONAL CONTROL OF INVESTIGATION
Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) The October 7 murder of internationally-known investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya has sent shock waves through Moscow. A public
OCTOBER 7 MURDER

2. (U) Moscow media report that internationally-known investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya was assassinated late-afternoon October 7 ju
3. (U) Prosecutor General Yuriy Chayka has announced that he personally will take control of the investigation because of its importance. Repr
4. (SBU) Politkovskaya's assassination has prompted an outpouring of grief and rage in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia. An October 8 demonstrat
5. (U) Other comments:
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-- Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov released a statement saying he was "deeply outraged and shocked by the fact that an honest journalist, who was al
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX: "The death of (Politkovskaya) is connected with her work in Chechnya..."
-- Chechnya's Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov said he was shocked by Politkovskaya's death, and rejected the assertion that the murder has Chec
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX: "Politkovskaya was number one in political journalism. . .the murder of such a person is a very symbolic event for Russia..."
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX: "The fact that (the murder) occurred on the birthday of President Putin makes it a complicated political provocation. . .It is
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX in a conversation with Embassy XXXXXXXXXXXX paid tribute to Politkovskaya, "a hero who cannot be replaced."
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX have launched their own investigation of the murder. XXXXXXXXXXXX Duma Deputy Aleksandr Lebedev has offered a 25 million ruble
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX: "conversations about freedom of speech are still just conversations. . .This cynical crime is an echo of the turbulent 90s";
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX: "The (murder) is a political provocation, which may be followed by the murders of other well-known people. . .";
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX: "Politkovskaya was an icon who, we believed, had reached the point where she had transcended danger. XXXXXXXXXXXX guessed that
-- XXXXXXXXXXXX reported that Moscow-based human rights organizations would be convening soon for a strategy session in the wake of Politkovska
6. (SBU) The mailbox in front of Politkovskaya's apartment on a busy street has been turned into an informal shrine, with flowers and a pictur

WHY POLITKOVSKAYA?

7. (C) The assassination of one of Russia's most outspoken journalists and the absence to date of any leads has generated much speculation abc
8. (C) There have been at least two criminal cases opened against people who have threatened Politkovskaya in the past, and she was prominent
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October 8. XXXXXXXXXXXX
9. (C) Among the other, highly speculative theories making the rounds here:
-- according to XXXXXXXXXXXX (and others), the assassination is a "poisoned gift" for President Putin. It will be used by some to argue that
-- others theorize that Politkovskaya's death was tied not to Putin's birthday, but to the thirtieth birthday of Chechnya's Premier Ramzan Kady
10. (C) In the more implausible category:
-- others argue that the assassination will be used, like journalist Georgiy Gongadze's death in Ukraine, as a reference point in an effort to

THE U.S. CONNECTION

11. (SBU) Politkovskaya was a U.S. citizen by birth and U.S. passport holder, although she spent most of her adult life in Russia.

GOR REACTION

12. (C) As noted above, Prosecutor General Yuriy Chayka has taken personal charge of the investigation, and it appears that the authorities ar